



WATERBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Health. Moves. Minds.

**Testimony of Tara A. Linskey
Health Educator, Waterbury Public Schools**

***H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNium ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

*February 23 2017 Appropriations Subcommittee on Health Public Hearing
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Regional Action Council Funding*

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Senator Markley, Representative Dillon and members of the Appropriations Subcommittee, Thank you for reading my letter and hearing my opinion. I am Tara Linskey a Public Middle School Teacher in Waterbury Connecticut, specifically a Health Education Teacher. Although I cannot be at this meeting in person, I wanted my voice to be heard regarding the grave cuts to regional action councils that will decimate the current prevention network structure, cuts which I strongly oppose.

The value that the prevention networks and the respective Regional Action Councils bring to our state, towns, and cities is immeasurable, not only in dollars but in improving the quality of lives of our citizens. Here is just some of what our RACs have done:

1. ***Opioids*** - Piloted Medication Drop Box program in 2011 and to date have collected over **85,000 lbs of disposed drugs throughout 70 communities.**
 2. Educated over **10,000 community members through forums.**
 3. Facilitated **Narcan trainings for more than 1,400 people.**
 4. Provided **Recovery Coach Trainings to 25 residents.**
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1. ***Tobacco*** - Executed the Statewide Tobacco Education Program (S.T.E.P) to ages 5-9 years.
 1. ***Mental Health Promotion:*** CPN members have **trained over 12,000 community members in QPR** – evidence based Gate keeper Suicide Prevention Program and have **facilitated dozens of Mental Health First Aid Trainings.**
 2. **CPN's work is a revenue saver - multiple studies indicate that every \$1 spent on prevention results in an average of \$10 in long term savings including healthcare costs.**

On a local level, The Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Action Council, which services the Greater Waterbury Area, has offered much support and education to the Waterbury School System. Personally, Director Jennifer DeWitt and her staff have offered very important and much needed information and support to Waterbury school teachers as well as over 15,000 students. The information and support provided by CNVRAC covered many important areas: Opioid Addiction, Smoking/Tobacco/E-Cigarettes, Problem Gambling, Marijuana, Synthetic Canabinoids, Youth Led Leadership Conference for substance Abuse Prevention projects, Youth Council focusing on the prevention of Underage Alcohol Sales, Health Curriculum Updates, Trained Youth Serving Professionals on A-SBIRT, Headed Waterbury Mayor's Task Force Against Substance Abuse, Peer Mentoring Programs, and Back to School Rally participation. The services, information, and support offered to Waterbury by CNVRAC is vast and absolutely priceless. They work tirelessly to better the people in my community and to lose this organization would have a very negative impact on Waterbury without question. Please fund our RACs. Thank you Tara A. Linskey

Tara A. Linskey
West Side Middle School
Waterbury, Ct
203-574-8120/tlinskey@waterbury.k12.ct.us